

CLAIMS

I Claim:

1. A foldable reading stand for supporting a book or other object, the stand having a closed configuration as a flat panel and an operational configuration when unfolded, said stand comprising:

a panel having a front surface for receiving an object, a rear surface, and right and left side edges;

a shelf connected to said panel and pivotal to a closed position parallel to said panel and to an operational position at an angle to the front surface of the panel, wherein the shelf in the operational position is adapted to support said object in an inclined position on the panel;

two support members pivotally connected to the rear surface of the panel near the right and left side edges, and adapted so that, when in the operational configuration, the support members extend rearward from the panel and diverge from each other to support the panel in an inclined position and wherein front portions of the support members extend underneath the shelf to hold the shelf in said operational position.

2. The stand of claim 1, wherein each support member is pivotally attached to the rear surface of the panel by a support member hinge that is at angle relative to its respective side edge.

3. The stand of claim 2, wherein said support members are vertical when in the operational configuration.

4. The stand of claim 2, wherein each of the support member hinges is an angle of 5 - 25 degrees from its respective side edge.

5. The stand of claim 1, wherein said shelf comprises a plurality of grooves, and wherein said front portions of the support members each comprise a tab adapted to be frictionally received in said grooves to secure the support members to the shelf in the operational configuration.

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6. The stand of claim 1, wherein said shelf comprises a plurality of grooves, and said support members each comprise a protruding snap adapted to be frictionally received in said grooves to secure the support members to the shelf when the shelf and support members are pivoted to be parallel to each other in the closed configuration.

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7. The stand of claim 5, wherein said support members each comprise a protruding snap adapted to be frictionally received in said grooves to secure the support members to the shelf when the shelf and support members are pivoted to be parallel to each other in the closed configuration.

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8. The stand as in claim 1, wherein the rear surface of the panel comprises recesses that receive said support members when the support members are in the closed configuration.

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9. The stand as in claim 1, wherein the panel is a single, rigid, non-hinged plate.

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10. The stand as in claim 1, further comprising a visual aid selected from the group consisting of: a reading light, a reading magnification device, a transparent cover, and a holder for a ruler or straight edge.

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11. A foldable reading stand for supporting a book or other object, the stand having a closed configuration as a flat panel and an operational configuration when unfolded, said stand comprising:

a panel having a front surface for receiving an object, a rear surface, and right and left side edges;

a shelf connected to said panel and pivotal to a closed position parallel to said panel and to an operational position at an angle to the front surface of the panel, wherein the shelf in the operational position is adapted to support said object in an inclined position on the panel;

two support members pivotally connected to the rear surface of the panel near the right and left side edges, and adapted so that, when in the operational configuration, the support members extend rearward from the panel to support the panel in an inclined position and wherein front portions of the support members extend underneath the shelf to hold the shelf in said operational position, wherein each of said support members comprises a first protrusion extending from an edge of its respective front portion and a second protrusion extending from a side surface of its respective front portion;

wherein said shelf comprises a plurality of notches, one of said notches adapted to frictionally receive the first protrusion of the respective support member in the operational configuration and to frictionally receive the second protrusion of the respective support member in the closed configuration, so that the support members and shelf are secured to each other in both said operational and closed configurations.

12. The stand of claim 11, wherein each support member is pivotally attached to the rear surface of the panel by a support member hinge that is at angle relative to its respective side edge.

13. The stand of claim 12, wherein said support members are vertical when in the operational configuration.

14. The stand of claim 12, wherein each of the support member hinges is an angle of 5 - 25 degrees from its respective side edge.

15. The stand as in claim 11, wherein the rear surface of the panel comprises recesses that receive said support members when the support members are in the closed configuration.

16. The stand as in claim 11, wherein the panel is a single, rigid, non-hinged plate.

17. The stand as in claim 11, further comprising a visual aid selected from the group consisting of: a reading light, a reading magnification device, a transparent cover, and a holder for a ruler or straight edge.

18. A foldable reading stand for supporting a book or other object, the stand having a closed configuration as a flat panel and an operational configuration when unfolded, said stand consisting essentially of:

a panel having a front surface for receiving an object, a rear surface, and right and left side edges;

a shelf connected to said panel and pivotal to a closed position parallel to said panel and to an operational position at an angle to the front surface of the panel, wherein the shelf in the operational position is adapted to support said object in an inclined position on the panel;

two support members pivotally connected to the rear surface of the panel near the right and left side edges, and adapted so that, when in the operational configuration, the support members extend rearward from the panel to support the panel in an inclined position and wherein front portions of the support members extend underneath the shelf to hold the shelf in said operational position;

securement systems for securing the support members in fixed relationship to the shelf in both operational configuration and closed configuration.

19. A reading stand as in claim 18, wherein said securement systems comprise protrusions from the support members that engage in one or more grooves in the shelf.

20. A reading stand as in claim 19, wherein a plurality of said protrusions on each of said support members engages in a single one of said grooves in the shelf.